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October 29, 2010

Re: Toledo Land Use Issues

I\ We am \are a landowner\neighbor with an interest in the South Lewis County Subarea Plan currently under consideration. I\We understand a "partnership of interests" seeks to re-designate land use to allow for commercial and industrial purposes near my\our home. Please consider this notice of my\our objection to such efforts.

Process

I\we first heard about this "scheme" at the Planning Commission workshop on September 15, 2010. It seems very odd to me\us that until this time the local landowners were not within the "partnership of interests." I\we was\were very upset to find there had been a map of the proposed rezoning finalized in August 2010. None of the property owners who were not represented on the Advisory Committee had any idea our land was being considered for rezoning. We found out quite by accident when a neighbor attended a City of Toledo planning meeting where a presentation was given by the Planning Committee chairman on the recent developments regarding the South Lewis County Subarea Plan. When asked about opposition to the plan, the presenter said there was no opposition. Our neighbor said there is no opposition because none of the people in the area have ever heard of the plan. This kind neighbor proceeded to get the notice of the September 15, 2010 meeting to many of us involved. This is the only way we knew anything about this development.

I\ We am\are unclear whether the September 15th meeting was required to be noticed pursuant to LCC 17.05.100 and 17.12.050. I\We do know there was no notice in the paper of greatest circulation, The Chronicle, before the September 15, 2010 meeting. I\we understand Barb Kincaid said that it was put in the Morton Journal which is the official paper of the County, because it has the cheapest rates for notices. None of us in the proposed area gets the Morton Journal. I\ We understand the notice was also on the Lewis County Web Site. Not many of us individuals have any reason to go to the Lewis County Website. Most of us are older and many are retired people not attached to the computer like the younger generation, so we don't use this medium. We were told we could download The Plan from the Website.

1. South County Subarea Plan, Project Summary.
2. Subarea Steering Committee, Meeting Notes, February 17, 2010.

After several of us attended the September 15, 2010, meeting we had fourteen days to try to discover as much information as possible about this Subarea Plan that had been

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worked on for the past two years. We were unable to find many details on Lewis County's website.

\ We also have serious questions about the meeting on September 29th at St. Mary's. \ we understand the County says it sent the required notice and a copy of the plan and draft environmental impact statement to the impacted areas, but Toledo Senior Center (the main location impacted) never received the materials. The materials were re-sent September 23rd.

We went to the September 29th meeting at St. Mary's where for the first time we heard a presentation of a summary with few real details of what the South Lewis County Subarea Plan contains. \ We were allowed to give my\our testimony regarding my\our concerns and voice

my\our opinion on the proposal. We received no answers to our many questions. We hope the County will do a better job of providing notice to the impacted persons as this issue continues to work its way through the process.

Substantive Concerns

As \ we understand it the South Lewis County Subarea Plan, if approved, will be adopted into the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan and must be consistent with the adopted goals of the Comprehensive Plan. \ We understand the Washington legislature, in RCW 36.70A.020, outlines several planning goals for counties to use as guidance when developing comprehensive plans. \ We do not believe, on balance, the proposed South Lewis County Subarea Plan furthers the bulk of those goals. \ We believe the county is simply putting the "possibility" of future economic development and tax revenue above other factors.

RCW 36.70.020 (1). Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

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\ We do not believe the South County area has adequate facilities or services, nor do \ we believe they can be provided in an efficient manner. The Subarea plan lists for Toledo to upgrade their water system \$3.5 million and their sewer \$12 million. Vader needs \$1.0 million for water and \$8-10 million for sewer upgrades to be compliant to codes.

Winlock and Toledo residents pay over \$200/month for water and sewer.

The property owners along Highway 505 and Plomondon Road have had to put in their own wells and septic systems at a very large cost to each of them. We have functioning utilities. Now we are being asked to help pay for the upgrades or a new Regional Facility in addition to our previous cost. It has been said by County officials that we don't have to hook on. We also know of several cases in our state and county that people were told this; but when they went to get permits for upgrades to their property, they were denied because they did not have sewer or water hookups when it was available. It cost them much more to hook up later

Further, the Subarea Plan states there will need to be traffic revisions such as stoplights or roundabouts at major intersections. When the Plomondon revision was done several years ago, the people negotiating the right-of-way told us they could not put a stoplight at the intersection of Highway 505 because it would be too much obstruction of traffic on a State Highway. Now it is in the Area Plan as an option. The cost of the revision of Plomondon Road/Highway 505 then was \$3.0 million. In the Plan estimates for traffic signals along Highway 505 are \$2,245,000 by 2020 and \$6,083,000 by 2030. That does not include the \$8+ million for Roundabouts by 2030. When someone has an economic

motive it seems things can be made to happen

RCW 36.70.020 (2) Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

\ We do not believe the South Lewis County Subarea Plan furthers this goal. We were told there is not enough previously "industrial zoned" land to meet the projected needs over the next 20 years. According to the County's figures there are 503 vacant "industrial" acres in the Winlock area and 32 vacant acres in the Vader area next to the railroad. Additionally there are 200 + acres in the Chehalis Industrial Park, 357 acres in the Curtis Industrial Park, and 400 acres at the Port of Centralia. There is also a proposed 4400 acres potentially at the TransAlta site. According to the plan the estimated needs for business sites for 2030 would be approximately 2000 acres. You already have that, even though it may not be in the exact location you want for your current plan for this area. This is an estimate you are using in case the economy recovers and growth begins again. The Agricultural Map of 2003 showed much of this land all along the prairie as farm land. Then the map was revised in 2008 when the South Lewis County Subarea Plan was started. Miraculously, after all of these years it is no longer considered good farm ground. Mr. Grose said that was because you can't grow crops on it without irrigation. One of the larger pieces of property is irrigated to grow crops, but still it is not considered prime farm ground. This is so development can grow instead on flat, non-flooding land with little clearing needed.

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RCW 36.70.020 (3) Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

RCW 36.70.020 (4) Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

We investigated the cost increase of our property taxes if we were to be zoned "industrial". The assessor's office stated that once one or two pieces of property sold as "industrial" that would determine the assessed valuation of "like" property in the area. The next time reassessment occurred, property taxes would change accordingly. Reassessment occurs every 4 years. The Subarea Plan lists farm ground as <\$50/ acre, residential, \$500/ acre and industrial >\$2000./ acre. So for a 5 acre plot valued at \$ 85,000.00 now, when rezoned, the assessment could be \$255,000 to \$340,000.00. The 2010 year's tax rate at \$ 10.50/1000 would mean that instead of paying approximately \$900.00 / year on a 5 acre parcel we would be paying approximately \$2677.00 to \$3570.00. For people on a fixed income and for others in this poor economy, that kind of tax increase would be devastating and very unfair

There is an incident currently that shows how unfair this could be to all of us in the near future. One of the property owners affected by this rezoning effort needs to sell her property due to personal circumstances. The real estate agents are telling her they can't list her property until they know about the rezoning because it has to be declared "industrial" if this passes. This woman needs her money out of the property now. If she is zoned "industrial" and no industry is interested in her property she is going to lose. Some speculator may buy her out, but you know they will buy it for considerably less than what

it is or potentially could be worth. Since many of us are retired or soon will be, with some in poor health, this could affect many of us in a similar way. We have worked hard for many years to pay for and care for the land and property we own. To have the use restricted in this way puts us at a great disadvantage. Many of us may not live long enough to see any of these plans come into being. We have worked long and hard and desire to pass our places down to our families so they too can enjoy a peaceful rural life. We are still going to be paying the huge price for what **might** come to pass.

RCW 36. 70.020 (5) Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

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Perhaps, taking our land and changing it to industrial or commercial purposes will lead to greater economic development. However, that is no guarantee. The Plan sights to increase jobs to the area. That would be good. Many of the things mentioned as possibilities such as research facilities, shipping terminals will provide only a small number of jobs for local people.

The way the State and Local governments give tax incentives to industry to move to the area, we could end up like Springhill, TN that gave huge tax incentives to GM to build the Saturn plant there. They paid to build roads, increase schools, police, fire services etc. AFL-CIO demanded that all displaced workers be given first chance at all of the jobs in the plant. Very few locals got jobs. Sixteen years later GM closed the Saturn plant and it now stands empty. The local people are still paying much higher taxes because the industry that was supposed to be helping lower taxes on the community is no longer there. The community is still paying for the improvements needed to get the plant there. We do not want to be in a similar situation.

We were told Winlock built a large sewage treatment plant that is running at approximately 25 % capacity due to lack of people using it. They spent several million dollars on their sewer system. The Water Park and the Equestrian Center tried to locate in that area. For unknown reasons to the community **that** didn't materialize. They were going to put in a large housing development in hopes Cardinal Glass people would need housing. **That** didn't happen. The county's proposed solution to all these community problems is a Regional Utility System. In this economic time we don't want to be setting here in the situation that Winlock is in, paying for a utility system that businesses were supposed to be paying for.

The Lewis County Web Site talks about removing the invalidity and development moratorium and changing rules to allow auctions to be held in the rural county areas that would allow Ritchie Bros. Auction Company to relocate from Thurston to Lewis County. The Web page also notes that plans are being made to expand the Toledo Airport for commercial and industrial use. Yet when asked about plans for expansion of the airport at the meeting of the neighbors on October 1, 2010, Mr. Grose said that had nothing to do with the Sub area plan. It may not be specifically in the plan but it does impact our

property immensely. We are not being given all the information. You are trying to keep us from knowing the real plans for the area. You forget it is the citizens that elect you to these positions. We have a right to know what is going on in our own communities. We have been kept in the dark for too long on this whole plan.

RCW 36.70.020 (6) Property rights. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

The County is looking to make decisions which will increase our property taxes and ultimately cause us to pay hookup fees if we want to develop our property. However, they do not seek to compensate us for these future costs\fees.

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RCW 36.70.020 (7) Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

RCW 36.70.020 (8) Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource based

industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries.

Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

See discussion above about farmland.

RCW 36.70.020(9) Open space and recreation. Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

The Plan seeks to eliminate open space and areas for recreation. We like living in rural south Lewis County because of the quiet, peaceful surroundings where we can enjoy nature and the beautiful scenery. We have moved here away from the traffic and noise and amenities of a city by choice. We do not want industry and shops and motels that will ruin the economy of our small towns. When strip malls and restaurants come along major highways the businesses in the small towns suffer or do not survive. If we want something you cannot find in Toledo or Winlock, we drive to Chehalis or Longview.

RCW 36.70.020 (10) Environment. Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

It is unlikely commercial or industrial traffic and industry will improve our environment.

RCW 36.70.020 (11) Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

See discussion above about the lack of citizen participation and coordination. This "scheme" was developed completely without the input from the local citizens who will be impacted.

RCW 36.70.020(12) Public facilities and services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

See discussion above about the sad state of facilities and services and the costs (which will be paid by local citizens) above under (1).

RCW 36.70.020 (13) Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of

lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

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The State of Washington had to cut millions of dollars from the 2010 budgets forcing cuts in most departments. The Governor has said there will have to be another 6% cut next year. With the County, the State and the Nation being in the midst of a "recession" of major proportions, property is selling at much lower values, if at all. The value of the dollar is decreasing with all of the money the Federal Government is printing. Now, does not seem to be the time to be increasing debt load and taxes on the population. When asked how all of this was going to be paid for, the planner and Mr. Grose said through grants, levies and bonds. We know how levies and bonds get paid; by we, the people. So we get to pay some more.

In this difficult economic time, we do not want this rezoning of our properties and our neighborhood. We ask for you to reconsider you plan to rezone the 500+ acres along Highway 505.

Very truly yours,

Antoinette J Nelson AKA Antoinette Jacobsen

Landowner and Concerned Citizen

David A. Jones

DAJ:ljm

October 30, 2010

Lewis County Plan Commission
Community Development
2025 NE Kresky Ave.
Chehalis, WA 98532

Enclosed is my letter of objection to the rezoning of land in the South Lewis County Subarea Plan.

My parcel number is 011437019000.

Sincerely,

Antoinette J. Nelson

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